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Afghan Transit Trade Customs Clearance Procedures

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Approved By:

Michael Ward

Prepared By:

Michael Ward

Report Highlights:

This report outlines the customs clearance process for Afghan transit trade goods bound for Afghanistan transiting Pakistani ports.

Transit Trade Customs Clearance

The majority of Afghan imports which do not originate in neighboring countries transit Pakistani sea ports before heading to Afghanistan via truck or rail. Timely customs clearance and freight forwarding in Pakistan are essential for U.S. agricultural exporters to be competitive in the Afghan market. This report outlines the customs and freight forwarding procedures for Afghan cargo transiting Pakistani sea ports.¹

Commercial cargo bound for Afghanistan is offloaded and transferred to the Afghan Transit Shed at Karachi Port. Note that per Pakistani government regulations cargo bound for Afghanistan must transit via Pakistani railways or by trucks associated with the National Logistics Cell (NLC). NLC is a Pakistani military run trucking and rail company. Although the regulation states that only NLC trucks can transport Afghan goods from Pakistani Ports, this regulation is currently interpreted that NLC trucks include private carriers licensed/bonded by NLC. Pakistani freight forwarders can provide the information on what trucking lines are approved by NLC for transit to Afghanistan. However, it should be noted that the Pakistani government has changed their interpretation of the NLC regulation and at certain times only NLC trucks can carry good bound for Afghanistan. This variable interpretation adds uncertainty to the transportation logistics of shipping Afghan goods through Pakistan.

Requirements for Commercial Cargo Ex-Arrival Karachi Port

Documents Required: *Bill of Lading, Commercial Invoice, Packing List, and Jawaz Nama (Afghan Import License)*

The Commercial Invoice and Packing List should declare “Goods in Transit to Afghanistan” on each document.

The consignee or supplier’s representative should send the Jawaz Nama, issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and attested by the Afghan Consulate in Karachi, and a letter authorizing the freight forwarder to act on behalf of the consignee to the freight forwarder.

Once these documents are received the freight forwarder can proceed with customs examination by submitting the Bill of Lading, Commercial Invoice, Packing List, Jawaz Nama, and Authorization Letter to the Karachi Customs House. Customs clearance normally takes 3-5 business days. Once clearance is granted, copies of these documents are provided to the Pakistani Central Board of Revenue in order to request a letter of transportation or Transit Permit for transit on NLC or NLC bonded carriers. It normally takes 2-3 business days for NLC to issue a Transit Permit. This is the only option for land

¹ This report is a cursory review of Afghan-Pakistani Transit Trade customs clearance processes and should not be interpreted as a definitive source of information.

transportation for transit trade goods bound for Afghanistan.

Customs Clearance at the Pakistani-Afghan Border

It takes 1-2 business days to request a Rahdari (a transit pass) once shipments reach the Afghan-Pakistani border. Once the Rahdari is issued the shipment can cross the border and proceed with Afghan customs clearance. On the Afghan side of the border the Commercial Invoice and Packing List are used to prepare a document that is submitted to a customs house (Gumrak) for Afghan clearance. Traders report that customs clearance on the Afghan side of the border takes between 1-5 business days depending on the volume of trucks needing clearance.